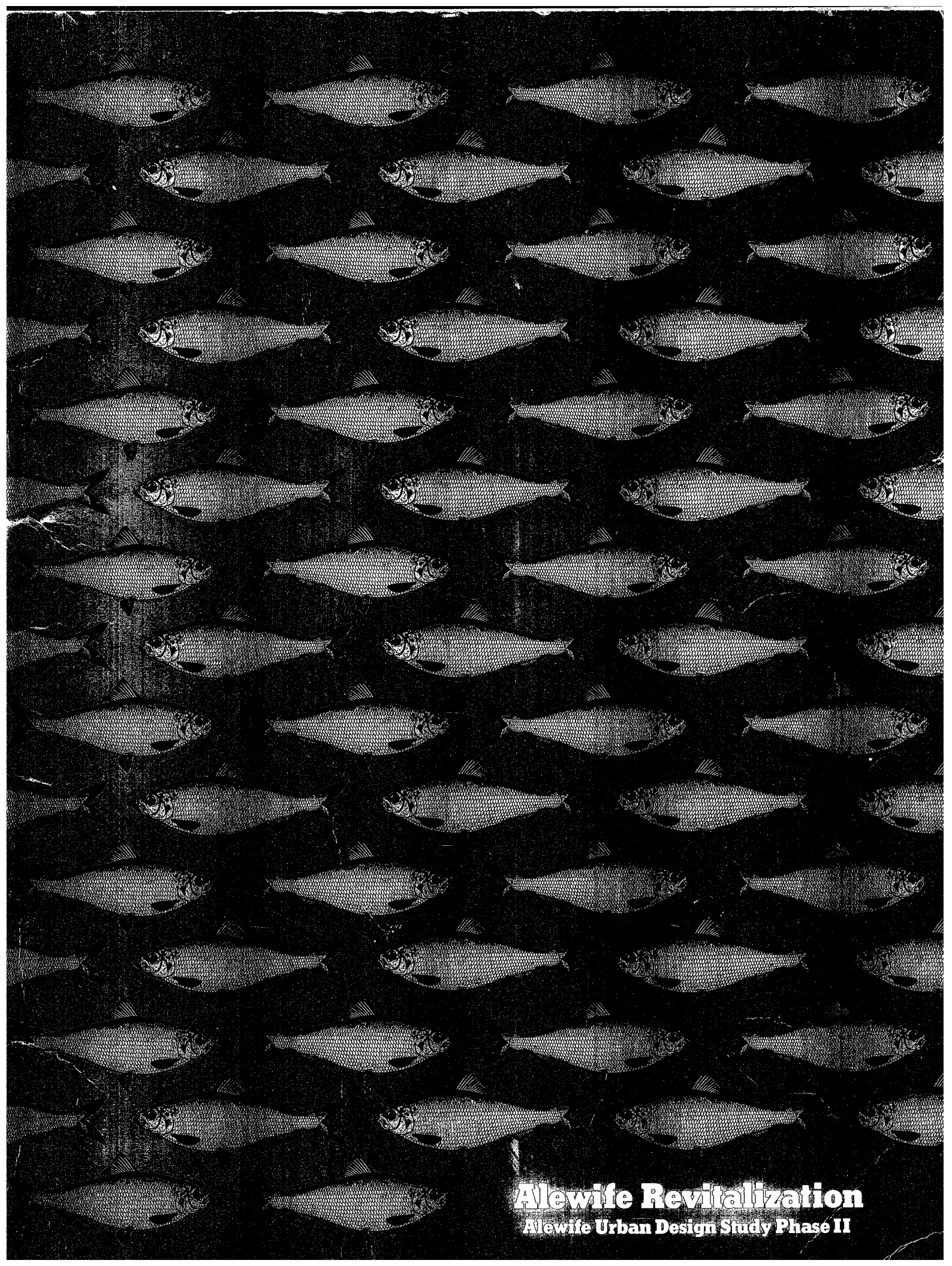

Alewife Revitalization

Alewife Urban Design Study Phase II

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Alewife Urban Design Study Phase II

City of Cambridge, Massachusetts
James L. Sullivan, City Manager

Community Development Department
Urban Design Section

Cambridge City Council
The Honorable Thomas W. Danehy, Mayor
Councillor Lawrence W. Frisoli, Vice-Mayor
Councillor Kevin P. Crane
Councillor Francis H. Duehay
Councillor Saundra Graham
Councillor Mary Ellen Preusser
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This study was funded in part by a grant from the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, and in part by a grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Part of the publication cost was provided by the Alewife Businessmen's Association through the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce. Special thanks are extended to: The Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority; the Massachusetts Department of Public Works; the Alewife Task Force; the Cambridge Chamber of Commerce Office of Economic Development; the Alewife Businessmen's Association; North Cambridge and Cambridge Highland neighborhood residents and the many Alewife businessmen who have generously shared their views and hopes for the area.

April, 1979: 5M

ale · wife (āl' wīfe') *Pomolobus pseudoharengus*, a small river herring found along the Atlantic coast and landlocked in certain lakes of North America, especially in New England.

The fish has a deep body and is heavily built forward, thus the comparison with an "alewife," the name given to a hearty seventeenth-century English alehouse keeper.

"The alewife is like a herrin', but it has a bigger bellie, therefore called an alewife." A Dictionary of Americanisms, 1675

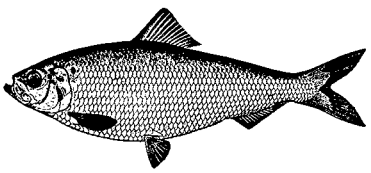


Table of Contents

Overview of the Study

Why Plan for Alewife Now?

Alewife, once an important job and tax producing center in Cambridge, is now in the midst of transition. It is changing from the unplanned industrial area which evolved in the 1940's and 1950's into an office, research, and service oriented center. To date, the transition has been slow. Some industrial buildings have been rehabilitated for new uses and a few new buildings have been constructed, mostly small scale structures. Now large-scale development is being discussed by major land owners with the potential for dramatic changes. Major public improvements planned for Alewife in the near future include a new Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority transit station and associated roadways. Taken together, these factors promise an increased pace and scale of growth at Alewife in the next twenty years.

For these reasons, Cambridge citizens must now ask themselves what kind of Alewife development is desirable, and how much of it is appropriate. The Alewife urban design study is an effort by the City of Cambridge to address these questions and plan for the revitalization of a declining industrial area. *The study is intended: 1) to evaluate the potential for growth and change; 2) to investigate the benefits and costs to the community of new development in the area; 3) to formulate a comprehensive plan to manage growth at Alewife; and 4) to outline a course of future city actions to revitalize Alewife.*

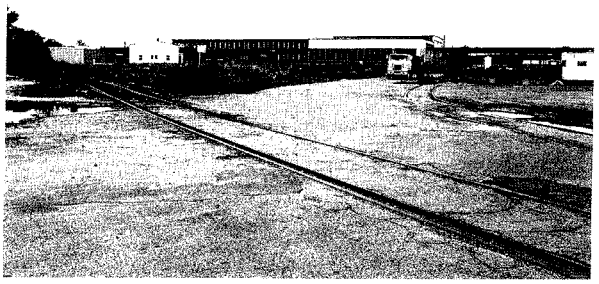
What's Happened So Far?

Over the past two years, the Cambridge Community Development Department has been working with area businessmen and neighborhood residents to determine the major community issues involved in growth at Alewife. The initial result of this planning process was a rezoning of the North Cambridge neighborhood. This re-zoning reduced the allowable residential density for the neighborhood, protecting it from land speculation and conversion to apartments frequently associated with high growth areas.

The Alewife Urban Design Plan marks the beginning of public discussion to determine the future of the Alewife industrial areas. This discussion must involve the full range of Cambridge interests: businesses, residents, and public officials. *In the next few months, a series of discussion meetings about Alewife will be held to explain the proposed Urban Design Plan, to hear suggestions for improving the plan, and finally, to reach a consensus about Alewife's future.*

Why continue this...

1. West Cambridge Freight Yards



2. Typical Industrial Area Surface Condition

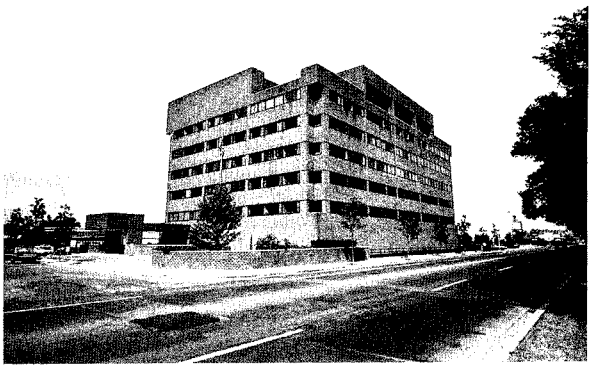
3. Recent High Rise Development

4. Industrial Buildings
Crowding an inadequate local street.

...when this is possible?

5. Little River
Alewife's unappreciated natural resource.

6. Abt Associates
An example of creative office site planning and design.



7. Bolt, Beranek, and Newman
Larger development need not be unattractive.

8. Alewife Brook Parkway
Landscaping major highways can improve the area image.

Why Have An Urban Design Plan?

An accepted Urban Design Plan, evolved through the participation of all Cambridge interests concerned, can help the city to structure Alewife change and strongly influence the course of private development. The Plan will indicate needed public improvements such as new streets, expansion of the water and sewer systems, and open space improvements to mold future development into a planned and orderly district. Next, a set of land use controls and zoning regulations will encourage a desirable mixture of land use at Alewife and prevent unwanted activities. Urban design guidelines, developed as part of the Plan, will help prevent adverse impact on the natural environment and protect nearby residential neighborhoods. Design guidelines also help to improve the image of the area.

The result of the Urban Design Plan should be the revitalization of Alewife. If the plan is developed and executed properly, new development should lead to many new jobs and a substantially expanded tax base without negatively affecting residential neighborhoods or over-extended city services.

How Can You Be Involved?

You can be involved in the community planning process for Alewife by discussing the issues raised in this publication with your friends and neighbors. You should also attend public discussion meetings to be held in the next few months to state your views.

Once a consensus Urban Development Plan is reached, the Cambridge Community Development Department will prepare new zoning proposals for Alewife. A zoning petition will be sent to the Cambridge Planning Board and to the City Council for consideration. Formal hearing notices will then appear in local newspapers. You are encouraged to attend these hearings and comment on the Plan. When the zoning issues are settled, a final Urban Design Plan will be prepared and implemented.

If you would like more information, please write to:

Alewife Urban Design Study
Cambridge Community Development Department
57 Inman Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139

or you can contact the Alewife Urban Design Team: Chris Dame, Michael Robinson, or Don Balcom at 498-9034.

9. Blair Pond Near Cambridge Highlands Neighborhood
This one acre pond could enhance private development and serve recreational needs of nearby residents.

Introduction To Alewife

Location

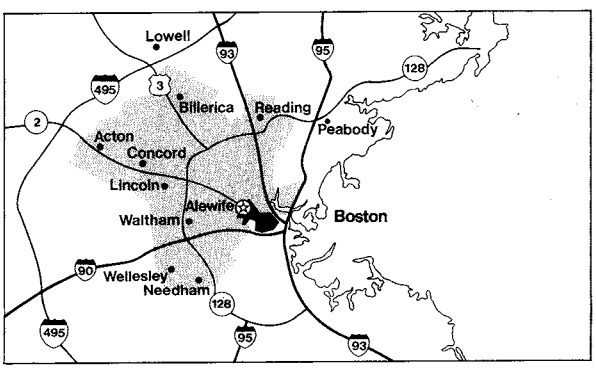
Today, Alewife is an underutilized industrial area located in the northwestern corner of Cambridge where Massachusetts State Route 2 meets the Alewife Brook Parkway. The area encompasses approximately 370 acres, everything north of Concord Avenue along the Parkway to the Arlington town line, and west to the town of Belmont.

Within a 30-minute drive of Alewife are Logan International Airport, the commercial and governmental districts of Boston, and many desirable residential communities, including the entire City of Cambridge (see Figure 10). Also found nearby are many major educational institutions including Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, providing a continuous source of technical expertise and skilled personnel.

The Alewife area enjoys excellent transportation access from regional highways like Route 2 and the Alewife Brook Parkway. It is serviced by an MBTA commuter rail line, Boston and Maine Railroad freight lines, and numerous MBTA bus routes connecting to the metropolitan subway system at Harvard Square.

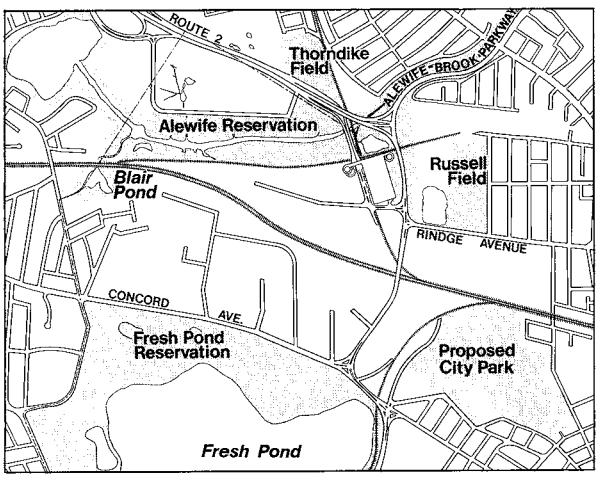
Surrounded on three sides by parkland, the area is graced with an abundance of open space (see Figure 12). To the north lies the Metropolitan District Commission's Alewife Reservation, 115 acres of open space dedicated as a natural area. To the south is Fresh Pond Reservation, a 315-acre city-owned recreation area featuring a nine-hole municipal golf course and a 166-acre lake. To the east is the City's Russell Field athletic facility. A 55-acre "city park" is also proposed for the old abandoned Cambridge Dump in the next five years.

In summary, Alewife's excellent location, with regional highway access and proximity to Boston's commercial and governmental center, its natural amenities, and its existing markets and labor sources, combine to make the Alewife area potentially one of the most highly attractive development sites in the entire Boston region.

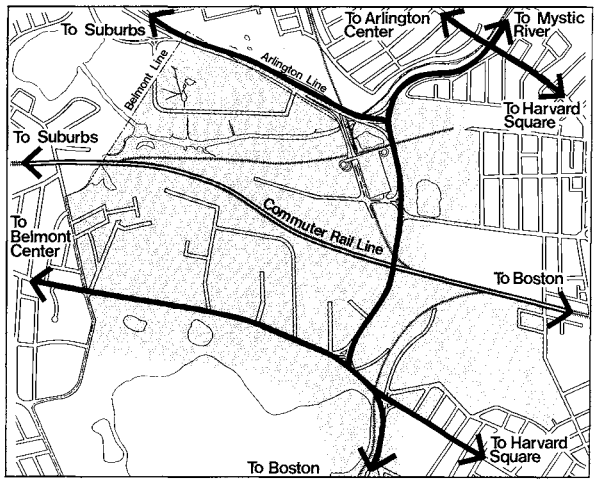


10. Thirty-Minute Driving Time
Locations reachable from Alewife by car include most Route 128 communities as well as the Port of Boston and Logan International Airport.

11. Little River at A.D. Little Office Complex

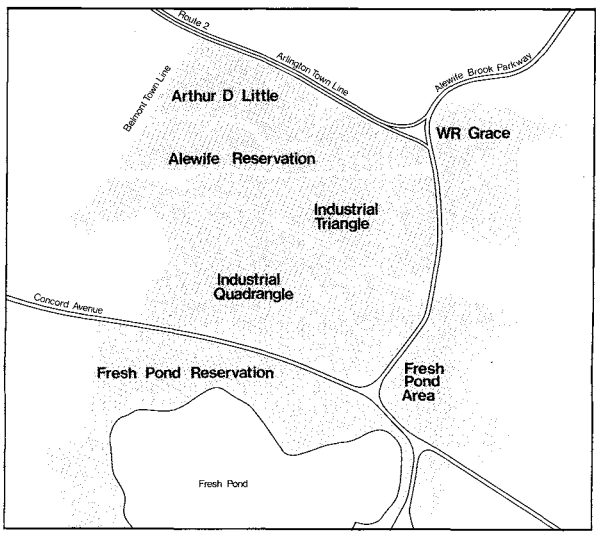


12. Adjacent Open Space
Alewife is surrounded by open space: private areas—Blair Pond; municipal parks—Fresh Pond, the proposed City park, Russell Field, and Arlington's Thorndike Field; plus state areas—the MDC's Alewife Reservation and Alewife Brook Park.

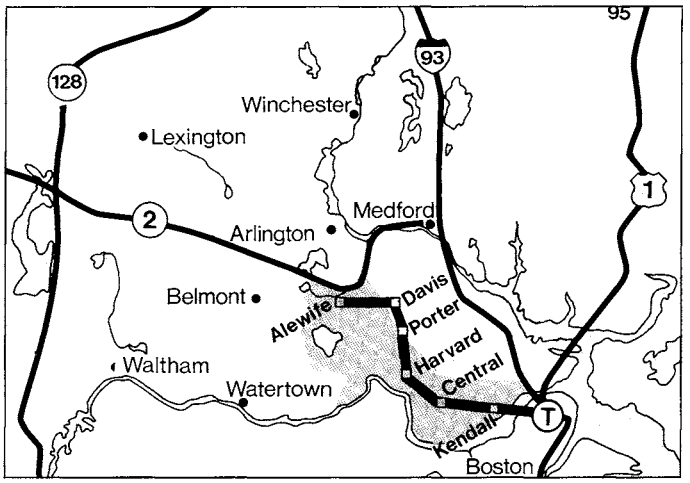


13. Area Context
The Alewife Study Area includes all the shaded portion—roughly 370 acres of open space, industrial, and commercial land.

14. Parking at A.D. Little Office Complex
The predominant land use in Alewife today is surface parking lots.



15. Alewife Subdistricts
The Alewife area can be divided into a number of distinctly different land use zones.



16. Regional Context
Alewife is found where Route 2 enters Cambridge at the Arlington and Belmont town lines. It will soon be served by the extension of the MBTA Red Line.

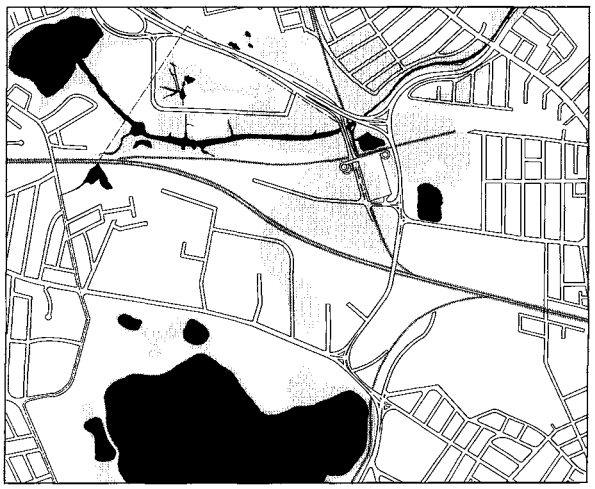
17. Traffic Congestion on Alewife Brook Parkway
Slowly moving automobiles characterize area roadways today.

Natural Features

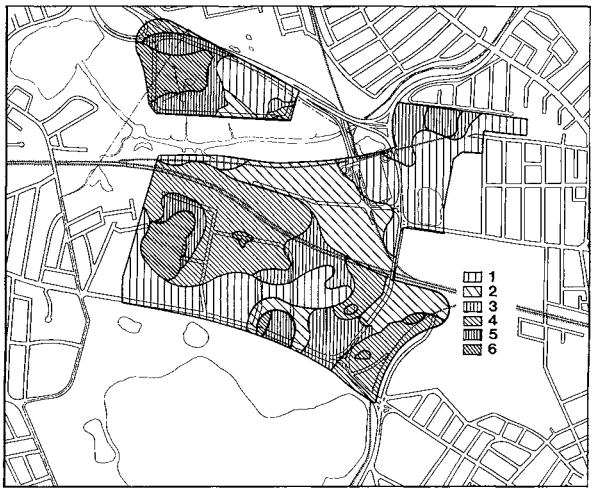
The natural environment at Alewife is both an inducement and an obstacle to new development. There is an abundance of public open space or parkland in the immediate area with connections to the regional open space system. Such features offer exceptional natural amenities for development as well as providing a buffer for nearby residential neighborhoods.

There are, however, a number of environmental drawbacks that must be considered. One example is Alewife's hydrology. The water table in the entire area is quite close to the surface, complicating foundations and the provision of utilities. Furthermore, the 100-year floodplain of the Alewife Brook watershed covers some of the most attractive development areas (see Figure 18). The Cambridge Conservation Commission exercises statutory responsibility for protecting designated wetlands and floodplains like those found at Alewife. This means that new construction will have to be well planned. It must avoid contributing to future flooding in the area and damage to important conservation lands to win Conservation Commission approval.

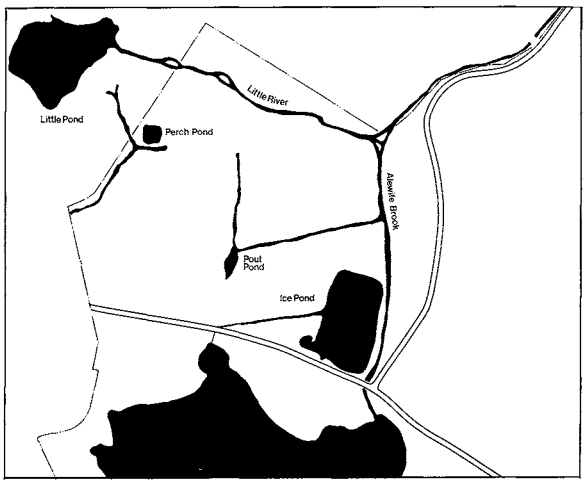
Alewife's surface geology poses other potential problems. In general, area soils resulted from the accumulation of glacial lakebed sediment of fine silts and clays with peat deposits developing over time. The result is a topsoil of considerable depth to bedrock, and low bearing-capacity soils. A recent study commissioned by the city identified seven soil groups at Alewife, each having different development characteristics (see Figure 19). ***The study's major conclusion was that the poor bearing nature of these soils necessitates special, costly foundation design for all buildings over three stories high. This is one more indication of the need for careful and cooperative planning for growth at Alewife by both public agencies and private interests.***



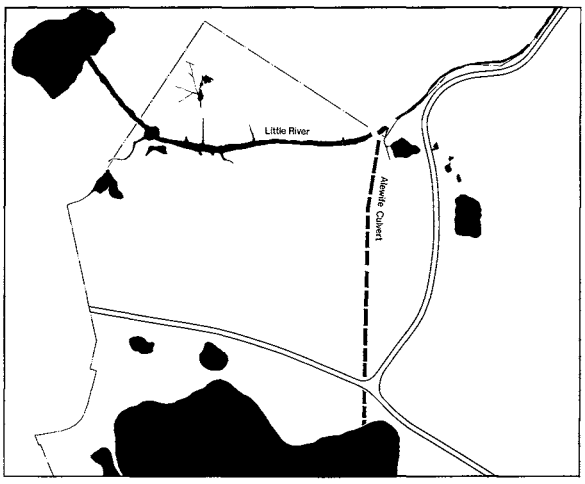
18. 100 Year Floodplain
Gray shaded areas represent land considered to be within the 100 year floodplain, and subject to special development controls. Black shaded areas represent permanent standing water bodies.



19. Alewife Soil Conditions and Development Costs
Premium foundation costs increase from Soil Zone 1 to Soil Zone 6. See Appendix Two, Table 5 for cost details.



20. Alewife Water Features: 1886



21. Alewife Water Features: 1978
Today Alewife Brook survives only in an underground culvert and the small ponds have disappeared completely.

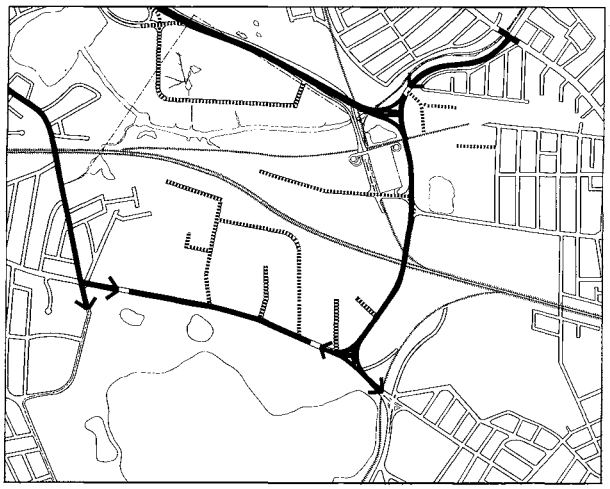
Man-Made Features

It is equally important for Alewife's future to consider its man-made features. For example, over 80% of the privately-owned land at Alewife is presently covered either by buildings, street paving, or parking lots. This condition severely aggravates the area's hydrology problem during periods of intense rainfall. The large amount of impervious ground cover prevents natural drainage of storm water, adding to the area's flooding problems. Obviously, new development must correct this situation through improved site planning and landscaping to provide as much natural drainage as possible.

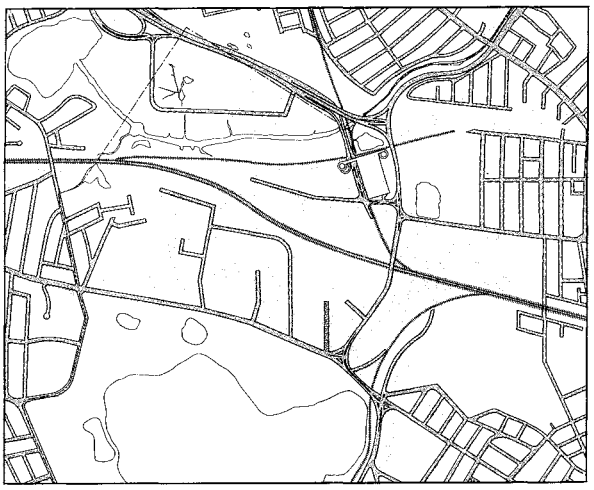
Alewife's water and sewer services also need upgrading. Today's utilities are the result of unplanned industrial growth over the last forty years. Even under the moderate demands of present users, the system experiences difficulties because of limited capacity, settlement of pipes, dead-ended water lines, and the general age of the network.

As for auto and truck traffic, Alewife's streets and roadways are hard pressed for a variety of reasons. The existing road pattern is fragmented and incomplete. Recent traffic studies have shown that for all practical purposes it is operating at capacity today. Historically, the Little River and the Boston and Maine Railroad tracks have been barriers to free north/south movement.

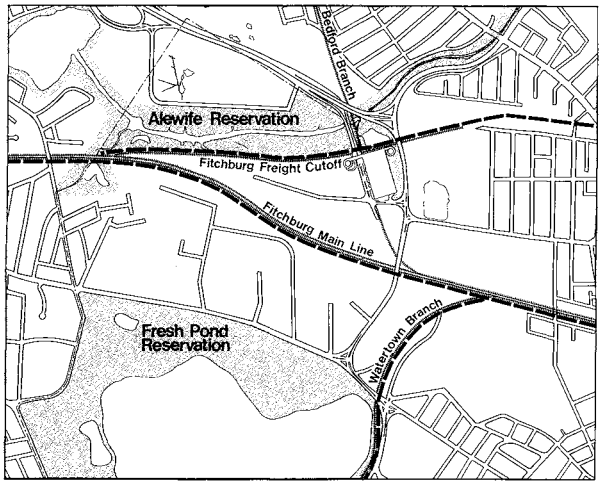
Improving traffic flow depends on finding a way to bridge these barriers as well as completing Alewife's local street system. Obviously, along with major new development in this area must come substantial changes in Alewife's roads.



22. Circulation
Although travel along Alewife's edges is facilitated by the regional highway system, the unfinished character of the local street system is awkward and inefficient.



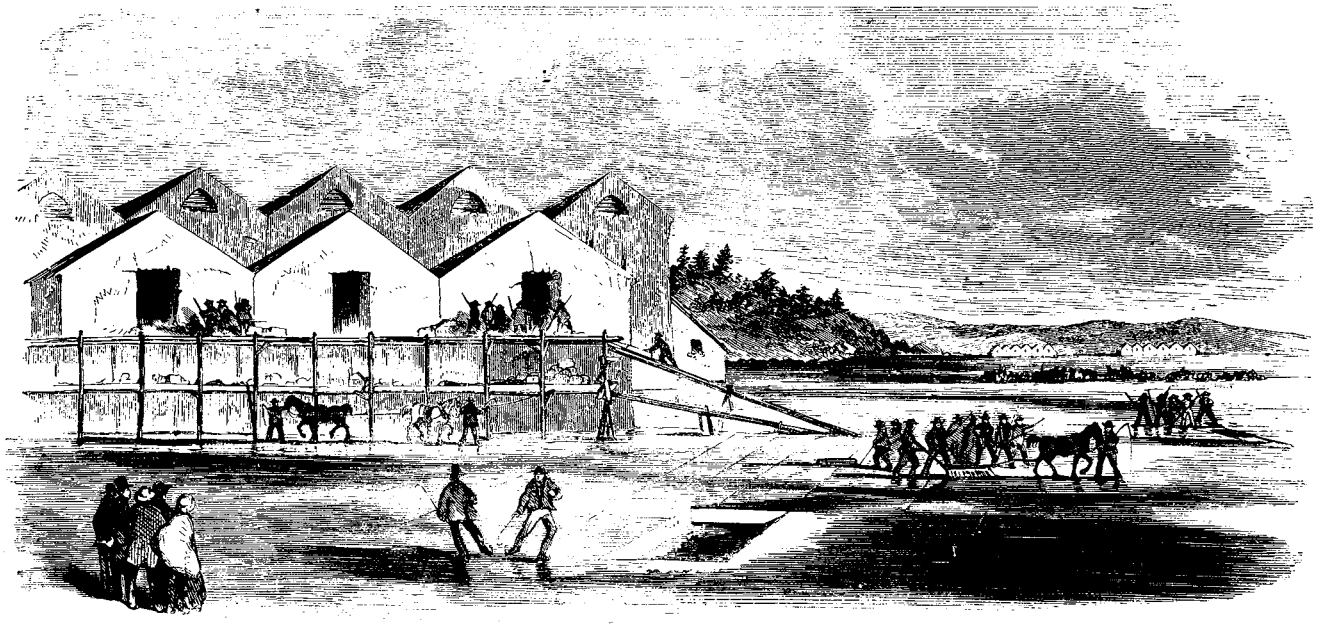
24. Impervious Cover
Gray shaded areas show land covered with paving or building allowing little natural drainage.



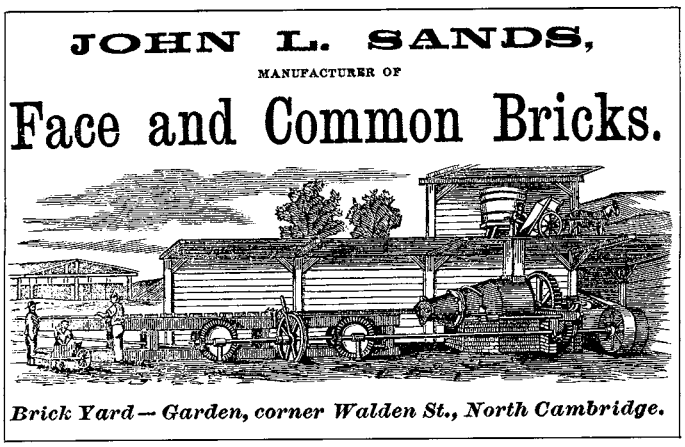
23. Natural and Man-Made Barriers
Numerous obstacles exist to free movement within Alewife: some natural —Alewife Reservation and the Little River; others man-made—the railroad lines.

Finally, the buildings in the area also need attention. Many of the industrial structures at Alewife are approaching the end of their useful life; they will need major capital improvements in the near future. Some, like the former Adley Freight Terminal, have suffered so extensively from ground settlement over the years that they now have no practical hope of recovery and must be replaced altogether. *Owners and occupants of Alewife buildings are facing major decisions about renewal and reuse of aging buildings. This would appear to be the ideal time for the public and private sectors to consider alternative choices for Alewife's future.*

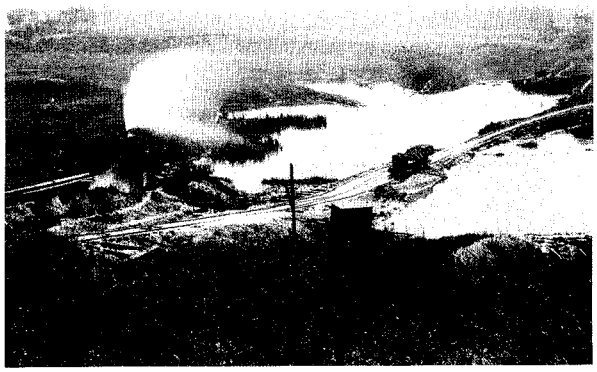
History



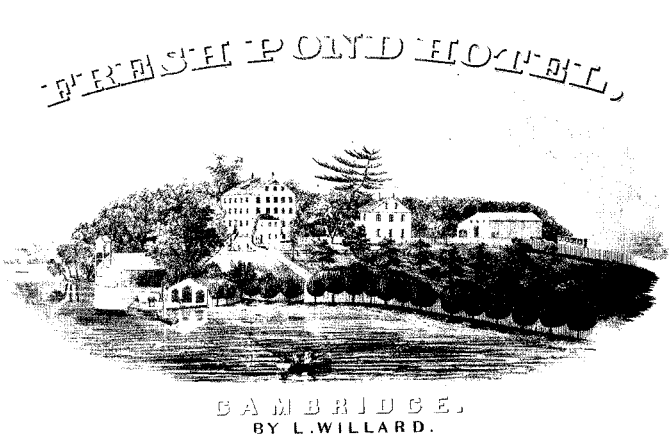
25. Ice Cutting at Fresh Pond
Ballou's Pictoral, *1855. The Hiffinger ice houses once stood on the site of Glacken Playground.*



26. Sands Brickyard Advertisement
Cambridge Directory, *1874. Site is now St. Peter's Field*



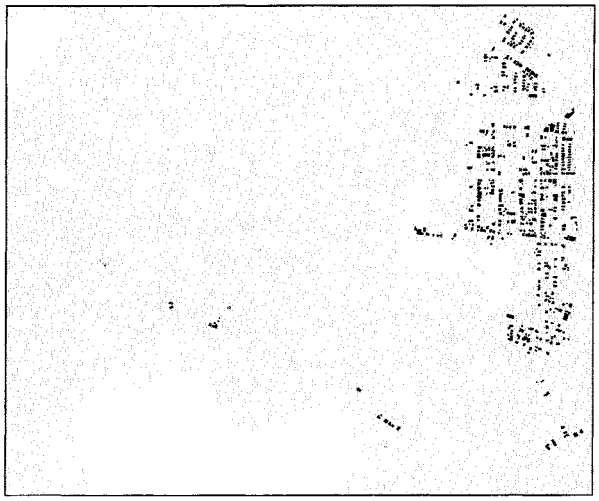
28. New England Brick Company
Circa 1930, site of the new City Park



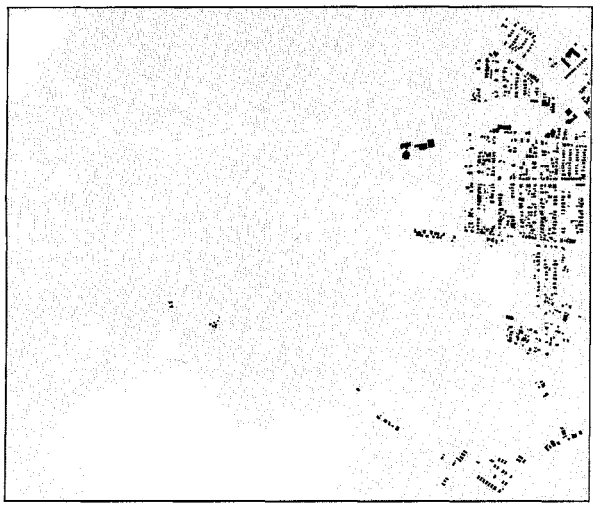
27. Fresh Pond Hotel
This lithograph from 1845 shows the site of Kingsley Park.

29. Jerry's Pit
A photograph circa 1945 showing New England Brick Company in the background.

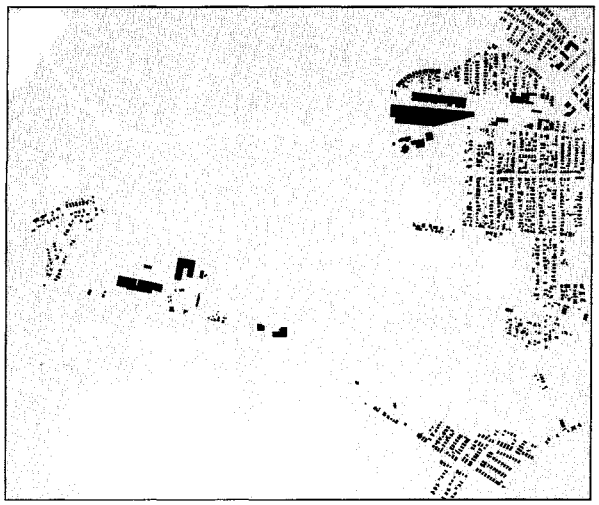
30. 1873



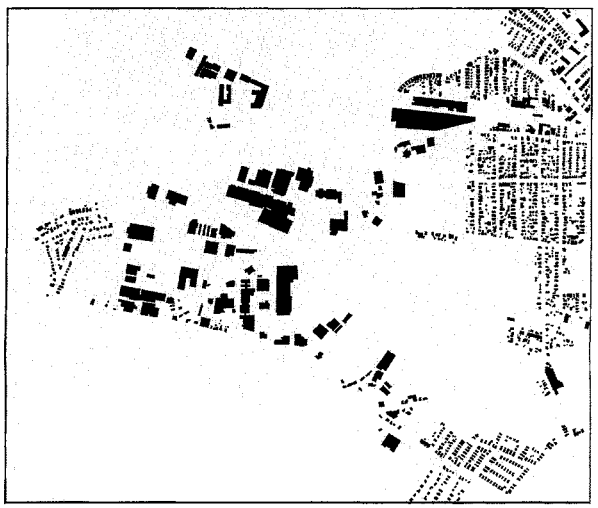
31. 1900



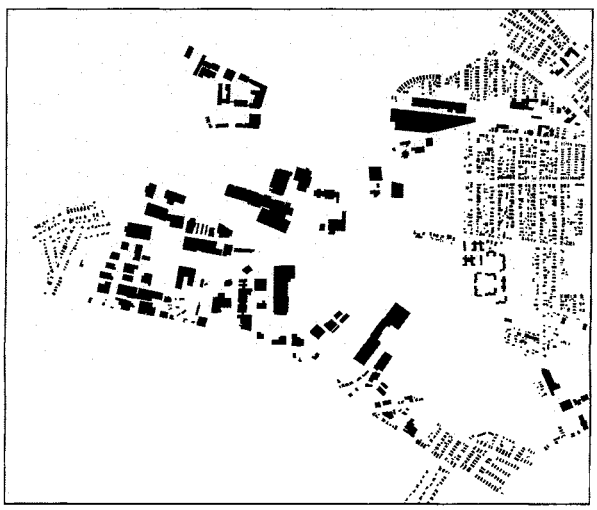
32. 1917



33. 1940



34. 1960



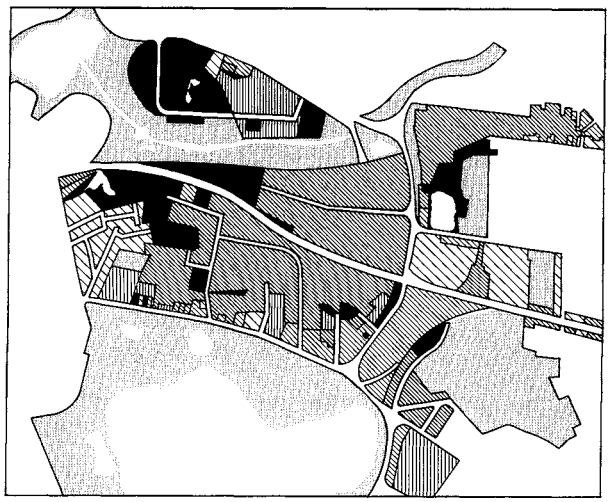
35. 1978

30-5. Historical Growth Patterns of Alewife
Drawings show gradual development of industrial and residential areas in close proximity over the last century.

Land Uses

Alewife's 370 acres and 223 buildings accommodate a mixed pattern of land uses ranging from residential to heavy industry (see Figure 36). This haphazard land use pattern reflects the incremental growth of the area as well as zoning regulations. The industrial zoning categories for Alewife now allow virtually all land uses except residential, with no setbacks, no landscaping, no sideyard requirements, and no height limits. There are, in fact, very few land use restrictions at Alewife.

Looking at the resulting use of the land, two surprising observations can be made: over 25% of the area is used for warehousing rather than industry or commerce, and over 20% of the area is vacant, awaiting more productive times. There would appear to be ample "room" for change at Alewife today, even without displacement of an existing business or destruction of an existing building.



36. Land Use at Alewife

- *Open Space*
- *Hotel, Residential*
- *Retail, Service*
- *Institutional/Governmental*
- *Industry, Warehouse/wholesale*
- *Research & Development/General Office*
- *Vacant*

Employment

In the past, employment at Alewife has been an important resource for the City of Cambridge. Roughly 140 businesses provided about 5000 jobs in 1974, or 6 percent of the total city employment (see Table 1). Since most of the jobs occurred in the industrial areas, it is easy to see that blue collar employment was and is an important asset.

Today, the employment picture is changing. Recent expansions have been in the research and development fields. On the other hand, some of the industrial firms which have traditionally been large employers have either cut back operations or announced intentions to relocate outside the city. If this trend continues as expected, Alewife employment will shift decisively in favor of non-blue collar jobs.

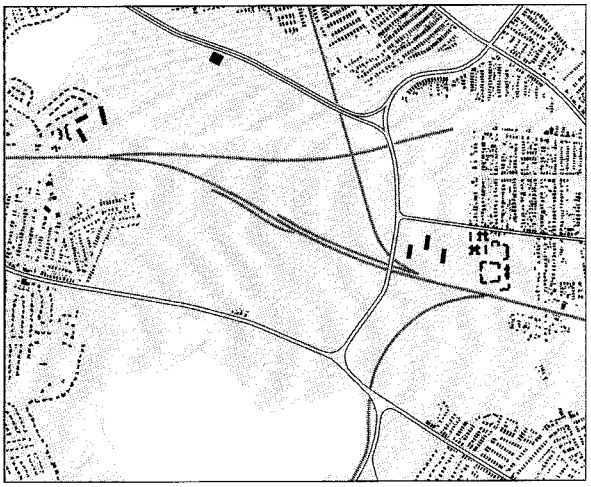
The shift should create more total jobs, perhaps of a more diversified nature, than the area has provided in the past. An analysis of jobs produced per acre of land used today shows that industrial and warehousing operations call for far fewer jobs on an average than the technical office and service operations that have begun to move into the area (see Appendix Two, Table 11).

If Alewife is to continue as a major employment center for Cambridge, efforts must be made to retain existing employers through improving the business climate at Alewife, as well as to attract new businesses to the area. Alewife's recent experience seems to be following a national trend: industrial firms moving to non-urban locations and being replaced in urban areas by a variety of office, retail, service, and residential land uses. In the case of Alewife, fortunately, the incoming non-industrial land uses should, in the long run, produce more job opportunities for Cambridge residents.

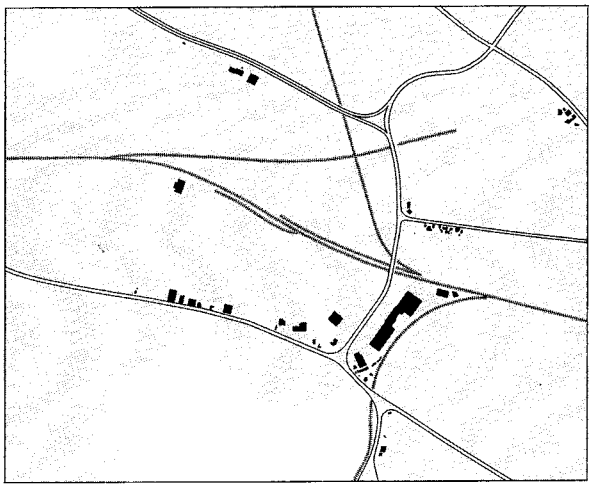
Table 1: Alewife Employment*

Sub Area	Jobs	% Total Study Area Jobs
A. D. Little	1318	26%
Triangle	583	12
Quadrangle	2256	45
Fresh Pond	875	17
Total	**5032**	**100**

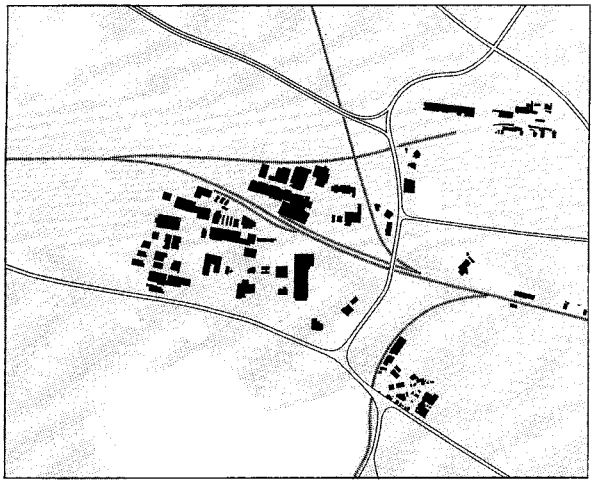
*Source: Alewife Businessmen's Survey 1974



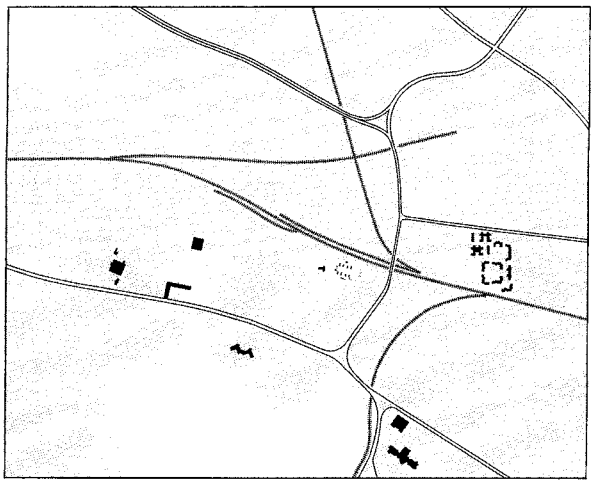
37. Residential



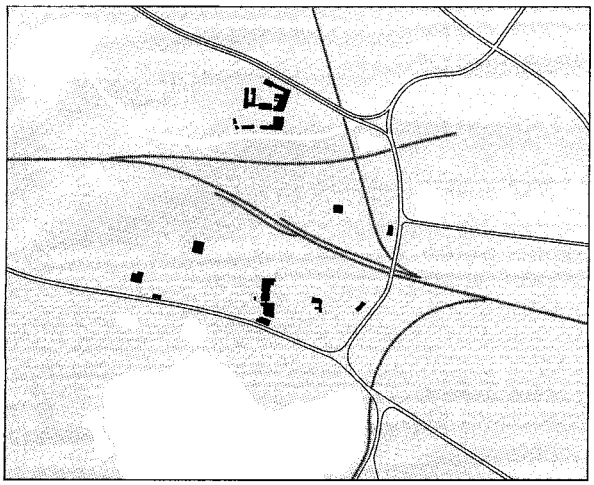
40. Retail and Service



38. Industrial



41. Transportation and Institutional



39. Office

37-41. Existing Land Use Patterns
Diagrams show pattern of individual land uses in the Alewife area.

Taxes

The final consideration in planning Alewife's future is the net tax effect of new development. At the 1978 Cambridge tax rate, the total tax value of the area today is approximately $30,175,000, or an average assessed value per square foot of land of $2.14. This compares to the city-wide average of $2.58 per square foot.

A study of assessed value by land use (see Table 2) reveals some interesting facts. Apartment-residential land use has the highest tax value, followed closely by office, hotel, and service-related land uses. The predominant area land uses, industry and warehousing, fall well below the Alewife average as tax producers. Thus, given current trends, traditional industrial uses are being replaced by higher tax producing as well as job producing land uses.

The cost of municipal services used must be balanced against the taxes paid to the City by various land uses. A recent Cost Revenue Study undertaken by the City attempted to determine the ratio of municipal costs generated by various land uses compared to total taxes paid by these land uses throughout the city (see Table 3). ***Looking at the results, the land uses expanding at Alewife today appear to produce more in taxes and generally cost less to the City than the more land intensive industrial uses which are being displaced. From a municipal cost standpoint, then, current Alewife trends would also seem to be encouraging.***

Table 2: Assessed Valuation — 1978 Alewife Land Uses

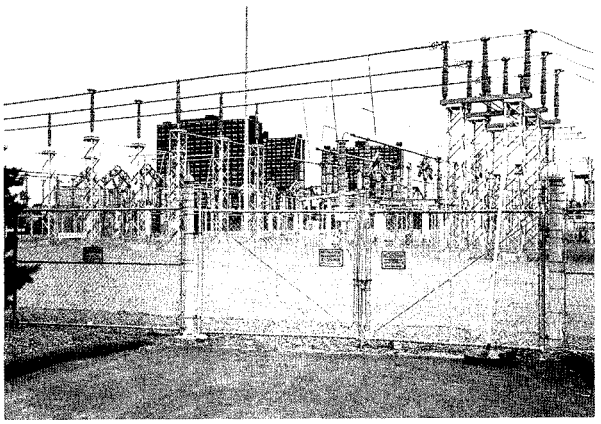
Land Uses	Assessed Value in Thousands	Assessed Value/Sq. Ft.
Hotel	670.1	$3.14
Heavy Industry	2,746.5	2.01
Light Industry	1,290.2	1.58
Open Space/Recreation	11.7	0.06
Research & Development/ General Office	6,480.1	5.60
Retail	2,304.3	1.91
Residential: 1-3 units	498.1	1.28
Residential: Apartments	5,286.0	5.88
Service	1,793.6	2.36
Transportation/ Utilities/ Communications	852.3	0.84
Vacant	829.4	0.35
Warehouse/Wholesaling	4,928.4	1.43
Total	**$27,700.7**	**$2.00**

Table 3: Tax Revenue Generated by Cambridge Land Uses Compared to $1.00 Cost for Municipal Services*

Use	Revenue to Cost Ratio**
Housing	0.50
Stores	1.43
Auto Related Retail	5.49
Wholesale	1.65
Factory	2.39
Technical Office	1.84
General Office	3.01
Utilities and Communication	32.74
Recreation	.20
Hotels	3.44
Parking Lots	17.67
Vacant Land	2.55
Warehousing and Trucking	5.49

*City of Cambridge Cost-Revenue Study — Part I 1976

**Ratio of 1.00 or more means land use pays more in taxes than it costs the City of Cambridge in municipal services.



42. Boston Edison Transformer Yard
Utilities demand few municipal services in return for taxes. However, they contribute little to the visual environment and create few jobs.

Improvements Already Planned

The face of Alewife will change dramatically in the next few years, even without an Alewife Urban Design Plan , as various state agencies begin long awaited transportation projects.

They include the following:

1. Route 2 Ramps — The Massachusetts Department of Public Works is presently conducting environmental studies preparatory to beginning design of new roadways at Alewife. Ramps from Route 2 are intended to channel MBTA-bound traffic directly into the new Alewife station complex, by-passing congested Alewife Brook Parkway. A major benefit to the City of Cambridge is that traffic destined for the triangle area will also have direct access to Route 2. Completion of the Route 2 ramps are expected to coincide with the opening of the MBTA facility.

2. Route 2 Rotary — As part of the Alewife highway project, the dangerous rotary at Dewey and Almy Circle is scheduled to be replaced with a signalized "T" intersection, with new access into the W. R. Grace Company area.

3. New Alewife MBTA Station — After years of planning, the MBTA's Red Line Extension is now under construction. The Alewife Station complex as proposed includes a 2000-car parking garage, a major bus station, and an underground transit station with entrances on both sides of Alewife Brook Parkway.

4. Rindge Avenue Intersection — In response to Cambridge's desire to prohibit through traffic on Rindge Avenue, the MBTA will redesign and construct a new Rindge Avenue/Alewife Brook Parkway intersection to prohibit physically most through traffic on Rindge Avenue.

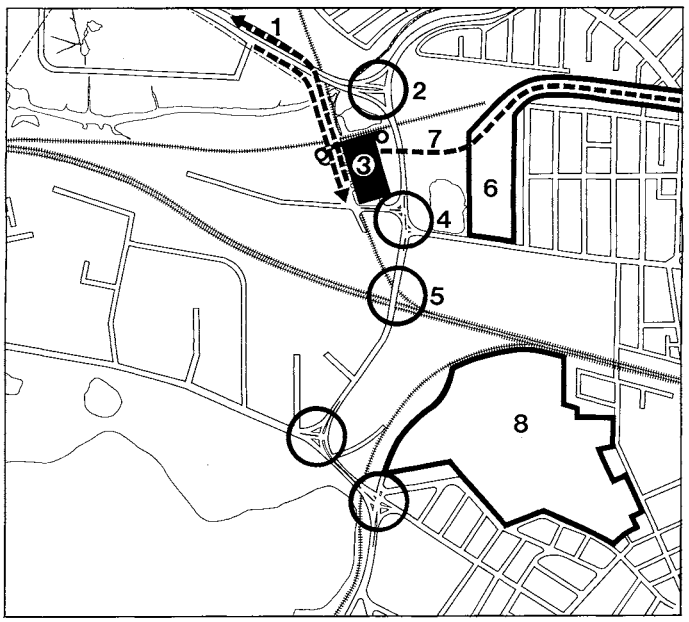
5. Fitchburg Mainline Bridge — The MDC's aging parkway bridge, long closed to truck traffic because of its poor condition, is now being redesigned with replacement planned in the near future.

6. Russell Field — The MBTA will construct new neighborhood open space on the site of the present city football field in return for its use as a construction staging and storage area during Red Line construction.

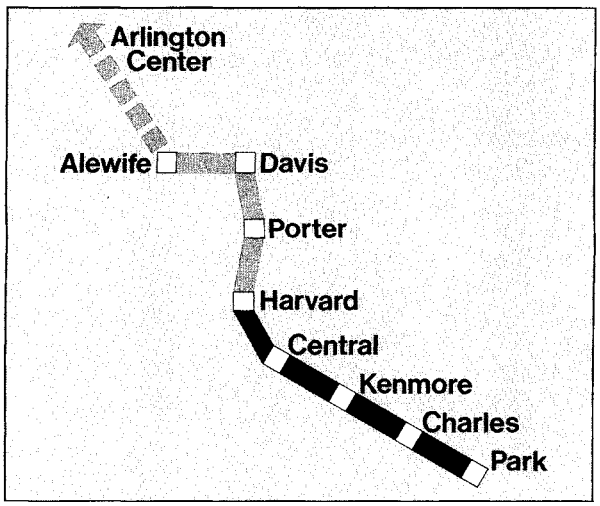
7. North Cambridge Linear Park — After the Red Line tunnel along the Fitchburg Freight Railroad Line is completed, the surface will be landscaped into a new city park connecting residential areas with the new Russell Field and transit station.

8. Cambridge City Dump — Also as part of the Red Line project the MBTA will provide the fill and money necessary to convert the 55-acre unused city dump into a new high school athletic complex containing practice and play fields for all city school sports. Additional land will be available for passive recreation areas.

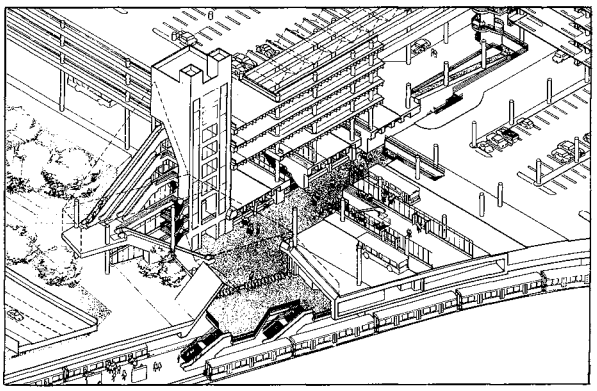
Other Alewife changes, unrelated to the Red Line, are also being investigated. For example, the City of Cambridge is attempting to persuade the M.D.C. to replace the two dangerous Concord Avenue rotaries with more efficient, signalized intersections. Also, the recent completion of the Fresh Pond Master Plan will enable the City to begin gradual improvement of this important regional open space resource. As a result of all these physical improvements the entire Alewife area will become more attractive for development.



43. Improvements in Various Stages of Planning and Construction
1. *direct ramps from Route 2 to the new Alewife station;* **2.** *signalized intersection to replace the present rotary;* **3.** *new MBTA station and 2000 car parking garage;* **4.** *redesigned Rindge Avenue intersection to prohibit through traffic;* **5.** *new MDC parkway bridge;* **6.** *MBTA-financed linear park and Russell Field re-use;* **7.** *new Red Line subway;* **8.** *new City athletic facilities on old dump site. Unnumbered circles show signalized intersections suggested by City of Cambridge.*

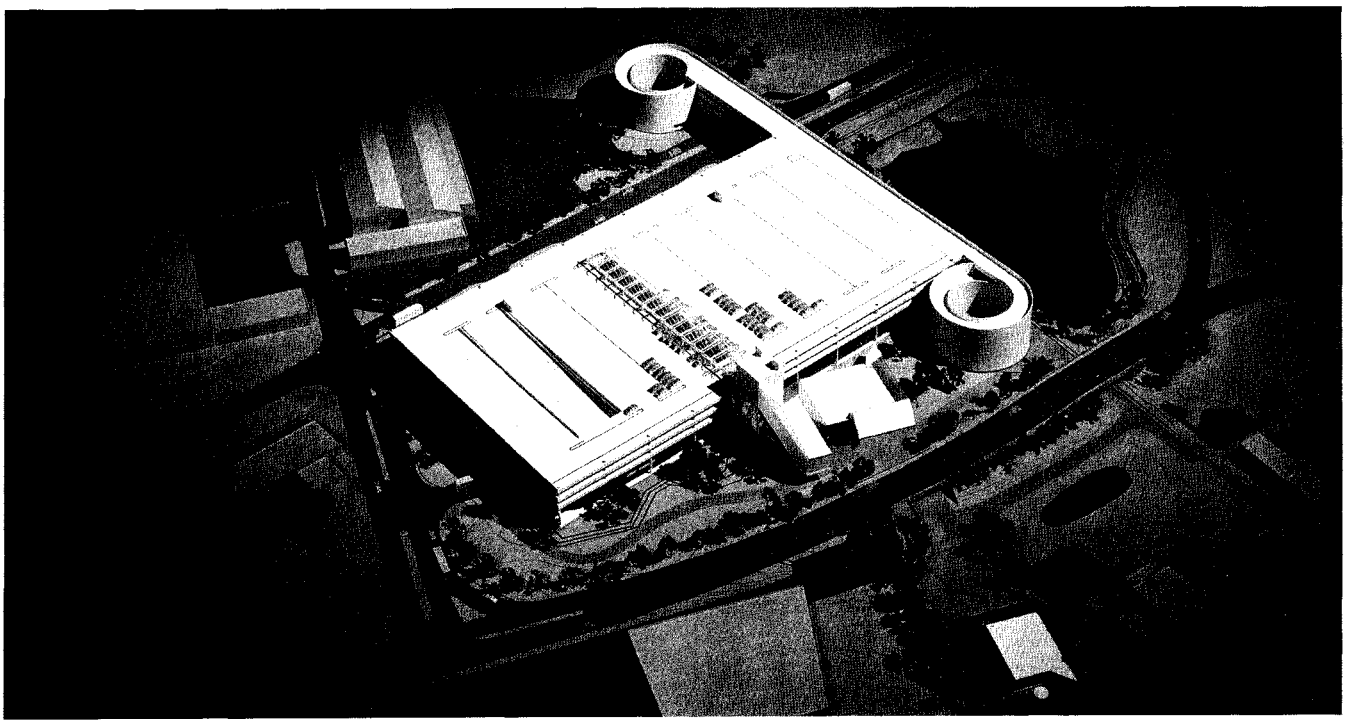


44. MBTA Redline Route
Black shows the existing system, solid gray indicates the extension presently under construction, and dashed gray represents proposed future extension.



46. Section through Alewife Station and Garage

45. Model of Future Alewife Station and Garage Complex
The 2000 car parking facility and transit station is planned to be opened in 1982-83. (Model courtesy of MBTA and Wallace, Floyd, Ellenzweig, and Moore Architects.)



Alewife's Development Potential

It is difficult for the casual observer to grasp the tremendous size and growth potential of the Alewife area. Alewife is approximately equal in total size to Boston's entire Back Bay district. Although Back Bay took 50 years to be developed as planned, it continues to change today. It is easy to see, then, that developing Alewife will be a long process that may never be completed; but, just as in the case of Back Bay, it is important to establish a planning structure early to guide development along advantageous lines.

Change is already underway. The type and scale of new Alewife building activity is strikingly different from past Alewife construction, and the pace of change appears to be accelerating. An example is the Abt Associates office research complex on Wheeler Street, beginning its fourth expansion. The Abt complex features quality architectural design, special landscaping, and recreational amenities. Bolt, Beranek and Newman's new 90,000 square feet research and development facility on Concord Avenue, completed in 1975, is another example of innovative and well-designed development. In 1978, five businesses announced intentions either to construct new facilities at Alewife or to rehabilitate existing buildings. Other major landowners are beginning to discuss publicly large scale development projects.

What makes Alewife so attractive as a development area? There are a variety of factors:

1. Valuable, Underutilized Land and Buildings
Alewife has 37% of the industrially-zoned land in Cambridge, but only 10% of the total industrial floor space. Overall, it contains 21% of all non-residential land in the city, but only 12% of the total non-residential floor space (see Appendix Two, Table 7). As heavy industrial activities at Alewife begin to decline, new opportunities are created for the reuse of valuable land and buildings.

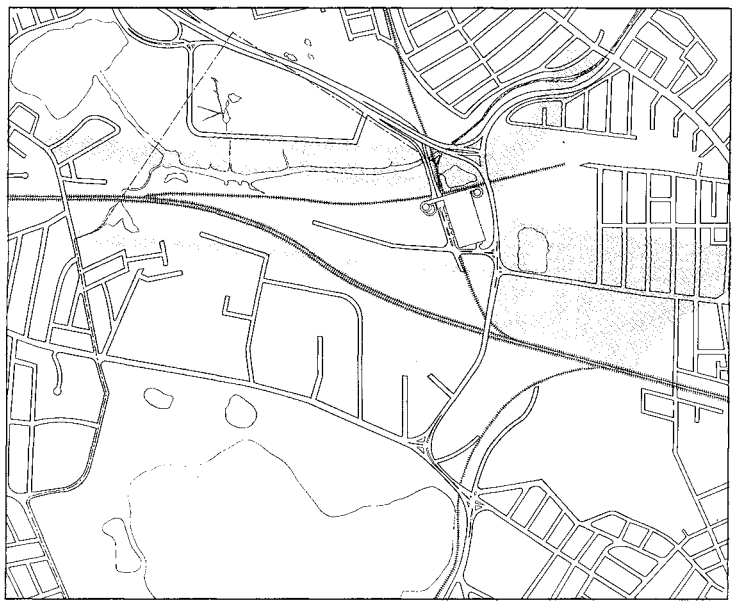
2. Large Parcel Land Ownership
There are only about 100 land parcels at Alewife ranging in size up to 25 acres, with an average size of 2.5 acres. This encourages larger scale development because land assembly, normally a complicated and costly process involving many different landowners, is either simplified greatly or unnecessary.

3. Available Vacant Land
Sixty-eight of Alewife's 370 acres are currently vacant and available for immediate development. These acres, under existing zoning, represent 7,728,000 square feet of untapped development potential. This is about two times more than the total built floor space at Alewife today.

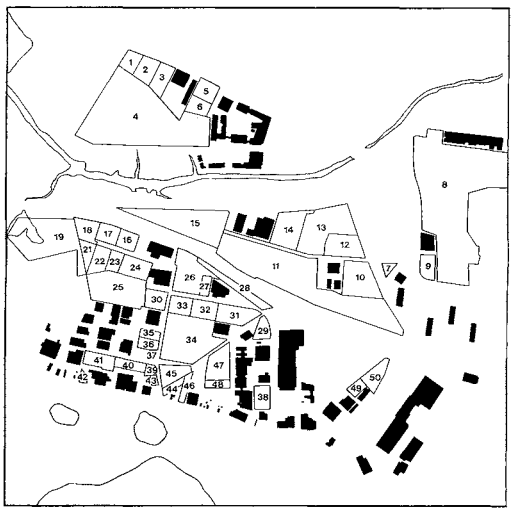
4. Good Market Prospects
Gladstone Associates, a professional real estate marketing consultant, examined the question of market prospects for Alewife development in a 1977 study done in conjunction with the MBTA Red Line extension. Forecasting for the period to 1985 only, Gladstone found a market at Alewife for up to 3300 units of housing, 700,000 square feet of office space, 560,000 square feet of retail space, 500 hotel rooms, and 50 additional acres of industrial development — *with* or *without* the Red Line extension. Gladstone cites as the reasons "excellent highway access, availability of land, and the area's ability to attract regional-serving, large-scale uses" (see Appendix Two, Table 8).

Hard/Soft Analysis

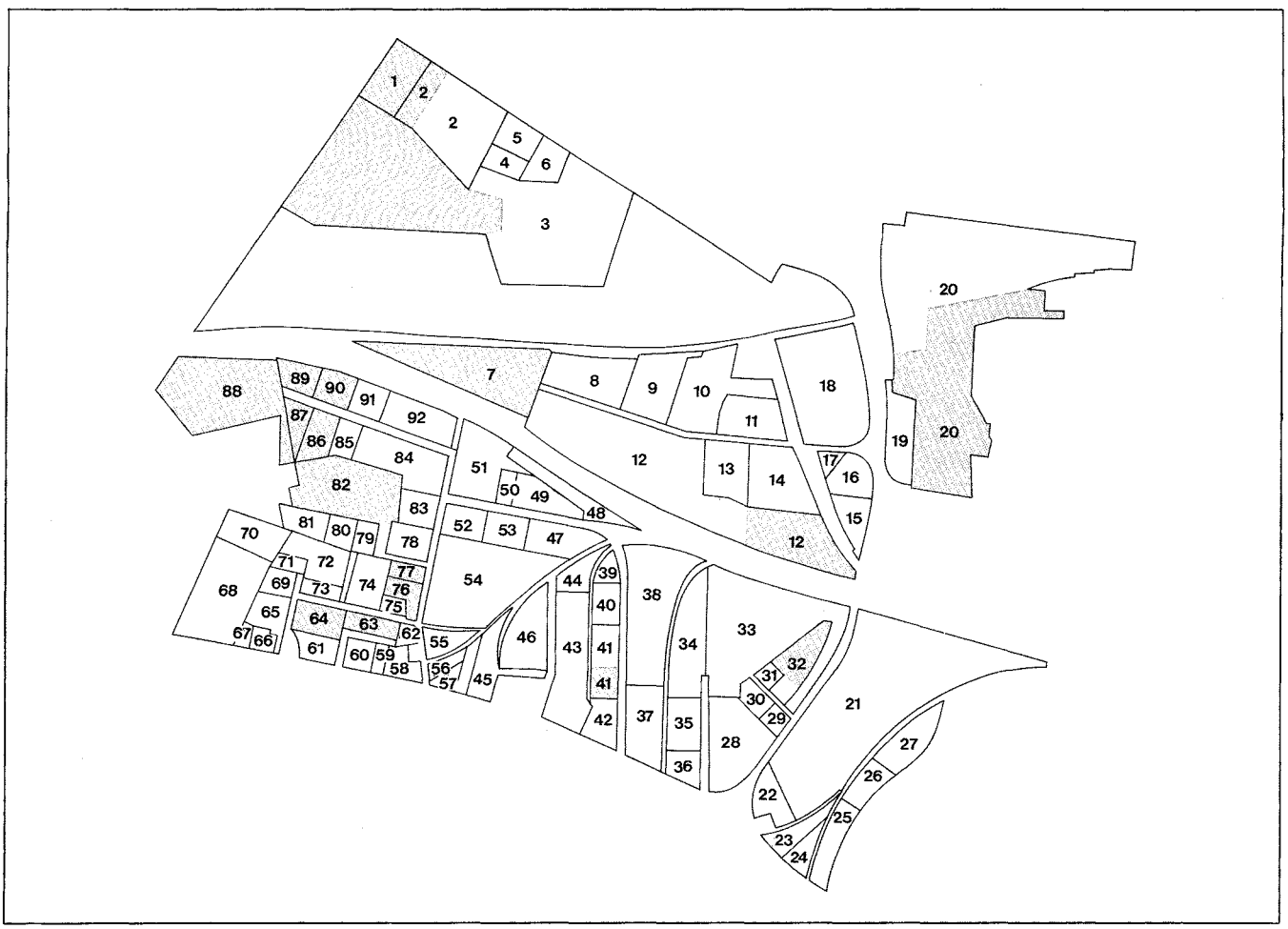
To identify the magnitude of change that might occur in Alewife in the next years, a determination must be made about which parcels will be susceptible to development pressures. The usual method is a "hard/soft" study. First the study estimates the "hard" land uses that are likely to remain over the next decade; then it estimates "soft" uses which are likely to be replaced by new development. Utilizing factors such as age and condition of existing structures, parcel size, and stated intentions of property owners, 50 Alewife parcels were identified as prime development sites (see Figure 49). These parcels represent approximately 125 acres of land, and they form the basis for the projected land use changes and proposed zoning districts in the Alewife Urban Design Plan.



47. Back Bay Size Comparison
Alewife is about the same size as Boston's Back Bay from the Public Garden to Massachusetts Avenue. The diagram shows a map of Back Bay laid over the Alewife area.



49. Parcels Most Likely to Develop
Black figures show buildings expected to remain. Outlined areas are "soft" parcels thought susceptible to development forces.



48. Land Ownership
Shaded areas are vacant parcels ready for immediate development. Information on the size and ownership of parcels is included in Appendix Two, Table 10.